

# INDEPENDENCE DAY 2002 *Message*



***To you,  
our veterans  
and Soldiers  
who continue  
to make today's  
celebration  
possible,  
we owe our  
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our promise to  
remember  
and honor you.***

**T**his Independence Day, we celebrate our Nation's 226th anniversary. In the time since our country's birth, the ideal of liberty—of freedom from oppression and tyranny—has been the guiding light for the millions of Americans whose dedication and personal sacrifice have secured our independence, preserved our liberties, and protected our way of life. Throughout our Nation's proud history, devoted men and women in uniform have secured the rights and freedoms we cherish most dearly, those guaranteed by our Constitution. Many have given their last full measure of devotion to ensure that future generations can live the American Dream.

As we celebrate our history of selfless service this year, Soldiers—the centerpiece of our formations—are again serving in harm's way, on point for the Nation. Soldiers are an essential part of America's efforts to end terrorism, to provide the opportunity for oppressed people to pursue a better life, and to ensure the security of our homeland. They serve in Bosnia, Kosovo, the Sinai, Europe, Korea, the Philippines—in over 120 countries around the globe. They are keeping the peace. They are training. They are doing the heavy lifting as part of the Joint Team fighting terrorism, and they are our “boots on the ground,” providing inspiration to millions who seek better conditions and more opportunities for themselves and for their children.

Whether honored veteran or new recruit, the bravery and selfless service of America's Soldiers have been instrumental to the success of this experiment in democracy that has so convincingly withstood the test of time. And for 227 years, The Army has fulfilled our covenant, our non-negotiable contract, with the American people; when called we will fight and win our Nation's wars, decisively. It is a covenant that millions of men and women have proudly lived up to for more than two hundred years.

To you, our veterans and Soldiers who continue to make today's celebration possible, we owe our gratitude and our promise to remember and honor you. Liberty and freedom are your gifts to the Nation. We thank you, and we salute you.



Eric K. Shinseki  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff



Thomas E. White  
Secretary of the Army

